



Dear Friend,

Thank you for letting me serve you in Olympia. The legislative session far exceeded my expectations.

On my desk is a plaque that reads “Keep your eye on the ball.” Whenever personalities prevented legislation from moving forward, or I would take myself too seriously, this plaque reminded me of the reason I was in Olympia: to serve my constituents — you.

I believe the 1997 session will be remembered for some of the best bipartisan legislation to come out of Olympia in years. After 60 years, we finally have welfare reform. After nine years of partisan bickering, we finally have juvenile justice reform. Business and Occupation taxes were rolled back, and the public will get the opportunity to vote on property tax reform and the Seahawks stadium issue at the ballot box this year.

All in all, not a bad year. This newsletter shows where I stood on many of the key issues.

If you watched TVW, you saw that legislators fought like cats and dogs as we debated some issues to the point of exhaustion. But what you didn’t see was the respect we held for each other behind the scenes. Sure, we disagreed and there were hard feelings at times, but there was civility.

I owe this to you. You were tired of the bickering of past years and you elected a more moderate group of legislators. Good job! It proved to be right, and the citizens of Washington will be the beneficiaries of this wisdom.

Sincerely,


Jim Kastama



Hannah Hepfer
All Saints School



Tiffany Jardine
Puyallup High School



Spencer Jack
Ferrucci Jr. High



Amber Zasimovich
Stahl Jr. High

Rep. Jim Kastama

These future leaders served as Legislative Pages in 1997. If you know someone who would like to be a Legislative Page for a week, give me a call.

1997 Legislative Voting Summary

Representative
Jim Kastama

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Jim Kastama

State Representative • 25th Legislative District

Please stay in touch!

The 1997 session is over, but I hope you'll remember that I serve you all year long. Please call me when:

- You have ideas for legislation.
 - You have questions or comments on an issue.
 - You have a problem with a state agency.
 - You want information about state policies.
 - or, you want to have a cup of coffee and talk one on one.
- The coffee is on me!

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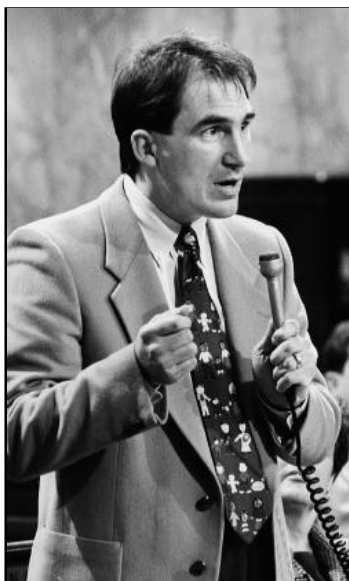
1-800-635-9993

Jim Kastama's Committees:

- Finance
- Energy & Utilities
- Children & Family Services, *Assistant Ranking Democrat*
- Governor's Task Force on Drug Abuse Prevention

Special announcement:

I'll be opening a 25th District office very soon, and I hope you'll stop by for a visit. Please call my Olympia office for the local phone number and address.



Representative Jim Kastama 1997 Legislative voting summary

- **Property tax relief.** I consistently voted for lower property taxes. I voted **YES** to cut state property taxes by 4.7 percent, and **YES** to reduce the 106 percent levy limit to the lower of 106 percent or 100 percent plus inflation. A public vote on these issues will be held this fall.
- **Business tax relief.** I voted **YES** to repeal the remainder of the Business & Occupation tax increase of 1993. Pierce County businesses strongly supported the repeal, which takes effect next year.
- **No gas tax increase.** I sent out more than 100 letters opposing a gas tax increase. Pierce County is already being hit with new RTA taxes, and this is no time to slap another tax hike on family budgets. We should have a performance audit of the Department of Transportation before any gas tax hike is considered. The proposed gas tax increase was blocked.
- **Operating budget.** As a strong supporter of the spending limits set by citizens in Initiative 601, I'm pleased that the new budget has the lowest rate of spending growth in 25 years. But I also know that we could have achieved more with the same level of spending if we had made education a higher priority while requiring budget reductions elsewhere. I voted **NO**.
- **Public Seahawks vote.** Should the public be allowed to vote on the Seahawks stadium issue? I voted **YES**. Since the stadium proposal calls for public financing, I believe the public deserves the final say. The vote will be in June.
- **Welfare reform.** I worked for welfare reform throughout the session. I voted **YES** for the governor's Workfirst welfare reform proposal, but **NO** on alternatives that didn't include health, safety or job-displacement protections for low-income workers.

The reforms that became law are close to the original Workfirst proposal that I supported. They include strict work requirements, a five-year lifetime limit on benefits, hiring incentives for employers, labor standards to protect workers, license-revocation for non-payment of child support, and some child-care assistance.
- **Trauma care.** Pierce County Democrats and Republicans joined forces in the effort to restore local trauma care services. The Legislature responded by authorizing a state trauma care fund, financed by a \$5 dollar surcharge on traffic tickets and a \$6.50 car-sale fee. I'm confident that with continued bipartisan teamwork we can build on this year's progress toward an effective trauma care system.
- **Insurance bailout.** When the Legislature voted to make taxpayers responsible for covering the debts of insolvent insurance companies, I was a loud **NO**. Unfortunately, it passed. This bill will cost Washington taxpayers a *minimum* of \$21.5 million over the next six years — and that figure assumes no further insurance insolvencies.
- **Juvenile justice reform.** I voted **YES** for what prosecutors call the most important juvenile justice reforms in 20 years. The reforms include much tougher sentences, more drug and alcohol treatment, more parental involvement in court actions, and, importantly, they require the most violent 16 and 17 year-olds to be tried and sentenced in adult courts.
- **Flood damage relief.** The Legislature created a one-year sales tax exemption on goods that replace items damaged or destroyed by the winter storms. I voted **YES**. This tax exemption was vetoed, however.
- **Medical equipment tax exemption.** My proposal to exempt home medical equipment from sales taxes was approved in committee, and I hope to see it become law next year. The idea came from a Puyallup family with a developmentally disabled child, but it would also be a big financial help to senior citizens and others who need to buy wheelchairs, respirators, or other medical equipment for home use.
- **Main Street Revitalization.** I cosponsored tax incentives for "Main Street Revitalization" to help downtown Puyallup and Sumner, and other commercial neighborhoods that are vital to a community's character. The Legislature and Governor agreed that the idea deserves a closer look, and a state study on possible tax incentives will be completed by December. This study will help us draft a proposal for next session.